

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                   1.       A method for collecting information about a network's operation,  
2 wherein the network includes a plurality of devices, the method comprising  
3                   using peer-to-peer communication among a plurality of devices in the network  
4 to obtain a measure of the network performance.

1                   2.       The method of claim 1, further comprising  
2                   using a numerical value to represent a characteristic of a first device in the  
3 network;  
4                   using a second value to represent a characteristic of a second device in the  
5 network; and  
6                   using a correlation matrix to combine the first and second values to obtain a  
7 measure of the network's performance.

1                   3.       The method of claim 1, further comprising  
2                   obtaining a measure of a plurality of characteristics of a first device in the  
3 network;  
4                   using the measured plurality of characteristics to generate a value, wherein the  
5 value includes one or more of the following: a measure of the operation of devices associated  
6 with the first device, a measure of the utilization of one or more resources of the first device,  
7 a measure of the response speed of the first device, a measure of the optimization of the  
8 network.